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GLOBAL CONSENSUS MUST TO REGULATE CRYPTO, SAYS FM

All countries need to work together to effectively regulate digital assets like crypto, Nirmala Sitharaman said

TECHNOLOGY HAS NO BORDERS: SITHARAMAN

She said no one country can effectively regulate crypto assets on its own as the technology underpinning them does not respect national boundaries. "No one country individually can effectively control it. Because technology doesn't have any borders, it can just pass through," Sitharaman said speaking in Bengaluru on Sunday

A GLOBAL TEMPLATE NEED OF THE HOUR: FM

- The minister said a global template may have to be created and all countries will need to stick to it for effective regulation of crypto
- Sitharaman said regulation would not involve controlling the distributed ledger technology, which underpins crypto assets. She noted that the technology has its "goodness and potential"

11.5 crore

INDIANS EITHER OWN CRYPTO OR HAVE TRADED THEM, ACCORDING TO KUCOIN

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Amritpal Singh being taken into custody by police in Punjab's Moga district | PTI

Amritpal Singh arrested after 35-day manhunt

Radical preacher detained under NSA

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

PUNJAB police arrested radical preacher Amritpal Singh on Sunday, after a 35-day manhunt. He was picked up from Rode village in Moga district, the native village of Khalistani separatist-terrorist Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. It was at a ceremony in Rode last year that he took over as the chief of Waris Punjab De.

He was taken to Dibrugarh by a special flight and lodged in a high-security prison.

Confirming his arrest, Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill said: "Amritpal was arrested at 6:45 am from Rode village as the police had intelligence inputs that he was hiding in the gurdwara of the village. The entire Rode village was cordoned off. Amritpal got the message that he was surrounded by police. Thereafter, he was arrested. We did not enter the gurdwara to maintain its sanctity. He was surrounded and had no chance to escape."

The 29-year-old radical was detained under the stringent National Security Act.

Meanwhile, former Akal Takht Jathedar Jasbir Singh Rode claimed on Sunday that Amritpal Singh reached Rode village late on Saturday night to surrender. "After paying obeisance at the gurdwara of the village where he also addressed a gathering in which he thanked people who helped him and explained his reasons of his late surrender, then he went outside of the gurdwara and surrendered before the police," said Rode.

However, IGP Gill categorically said the radical leader was arrested and that he had not surrendered.

When asked about reports of Amritpal offering prayers inside the gurudwara before the police took him into custody, Gill said he was not aware of what happened inside the gurudwara.

Police had launched a crackdown against Amritpal Singh on March 18, about three weeks after he and his supporters, many of them brandishing weapons, stormed into the Ajnala police station near Amritsar to secure the release of an arrested colleague. P8

In Dibrugarh Central Jail

Amritpal Singh was lodged in a special high-security cell in Dibrugarh Central Jail in Assam after being flown in a special flight from Punjab following his arrest, senior officials said

2 IAF C-130Js, NAVAL SHIP ON STANDBY TO RESCUE INDIANS FROM SUDAN

YESHI SELI @New Delhi

WITH the ground situation in Sudan going from bad to worse, foreign nations are racing against time to evacuate their citizens from the conflict-ridden country.

On Sunday, the US and the UK said they have pulled out their diplomats from Khartoum, while other countries including France, Italy and Belgium have begun the process to evacuate their citizens.

India has put two Indian Air Force C-130J aircraft on standby in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Sunday, adding that INS Sumedha has reached Port Sudan, a port city in eastern Sudan.

"As part of our preparations, and in order to move swiftly, the Government of India is pursuing multiple options," the MEA added.

According to sources, Saudi Arabia is a safer option for evacuation as they have been able to evacuate their nationals and also nationals of many other countries. India has an estimated 3,000 nationals in Sudan. Reports said three Indians were among the 66 foreign nationals that Saudi Arabia evacuated on Saturday.

Last week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had spoken to his counterpart in Saudi Arabia and asked for help in evacuating Indians stuck in Sudan. India is also in touch with Egypt, the UK, the UAE and the US for help in the evacuation process.

"The Indian embassy is functional. However, it is very close to the airport at Khartoum where a lot of shelling is taking place. We are extremely cautious," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, adding that the control room in Delhi is facilitating information for family members of those stranded in Sudan.

Officials said contingency plans are firmly in place but any movement on the ground would depend on the security situation, which continues to be volatile with reports of fierce fighting at various locations in Khartoum. The Sudanese airspace currently remains closed for all foreign aircraft. Overland movement has its own risks besides logistical challenges.

"Our Embassy is in regular touch with the stranded Indians in Sudan and is advising them on the viability of safe movement and the need to avoid unnecessary risk. It is also coordinating all possible assistance including possible exit from Khartoum city as and when the security situation permits safe movement," said MEA. P9

A convoy of vehicles leaving Sudan's capital Khartoum towards Port Sudan on Sunday | AFP

Evacuation ops in full-swing

Around **100** people of multiple nationalities evacuated from Sudan on a French flight on Sunday

The US military sent **three** Chinook helicopters to evacuate **100** embassy staff from Khartoum

The British army evacuated UK embassy staff & their families

Turkey began operations to evacuate **600** nationals by road from Khartoum

420 people, including 264 civilians, have been killed and more than 3,700 have been wounded in the fighting

Explosions rocked Khartoum on Sunday, leaving the sky over the airport with thick black smoke. The group fighting the army claimed the latter launched airstrikes on an upscale neighbourhood

BARTER PACT

State strikes deal with UP, Raj as power demand peaks

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

WITH the increasing demand for power in the state, especially during nights, the state energy department has entered into a barter agreement with its counterparts in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

"It is not a financial agreement, but a barter system. The amount of power received by Karnataka from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh now (during April and May) will be given back to those states during June and July, when Karnataka will be experiencing monsoon showers keeping the power requirement low. But in those states, the demand will be high during that time," a senior official from the department told The New Indian Express.

The official said the state is receiving 10 million units from Uttar Pradesh and 200 MW from Rajasthan every day.

Karnataka, as well as Bengaluru, on Friday saw a peak in daily consumption and demand. Officials said the peak consumption (24 hours) on April 20 was 309.5 million units across the state and it was 146 million units in Bangalore Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (Bescom) limits. In previous years, the highest consumption demand was in the last week of March, when Karnataka needed 298 million units and Bengaluru 144 million units.

The peak demand (recorded between 9.30 and 11.30 am) was also on April 20 at 16,180 MW for Karnataka and 7,480 MW in Bescom limits, as per energy department records.

"This time, there is a 18-20 per cent increase in demand from the agriculture sector during the day as compared to previous years. There is also a rise in demand from the domestic sector by 4-5 per cent. The demand is not very high from industrial and commercial sectors now," the official said. P5

SECOND CHEETAH DIES IN LESS THAN A MONTH

Weeks after a Namibian cheetah died at Kuno National Park, another one, brought from South Africa under Project Cheetah, too breathed its last on Sunday

BJP turns tables against Cong after Siddu's statement on Lingayat CM

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @Bengaluru

BJP that lost many of its prominent Lingayat community leaders to Congress ahead of the Assembly polls apparently got an opportunity to turn the tables against the Grand Old Party over a controversy triggered by Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah.

Asked whether Congress would make a Lingayat a chief minister if the party comes to power, Siddaramaiah said, "Already, a Lingayat is there as chief minister (Bommai), who indulged in corruption and destroyed the state."

Jumping on to this, BJP alleged that Siddaramaiah who had tried to split the community (over a separate religion status) in the past has now branded the community corrupt which is unpardonable. It is the culture of Congress and hating Veerashaiva Lingayats is in its blood, it charged.

Incidentally, the controversy blew out on Basava Jayanti day and on a day Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was taking part in the Jayanti celebrations at Kudalasangama to win the community's trust for the party.

Trying to contain the situation, the party did not give Siddaramaiah a chance to speak on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Panchamasali Lingayat seer Sri Jaya Mruthyunjaya Swamiji insisted that Siddaramaiah review and withdraw his statement.

"Lingayat community leaders S Nijalingappa, Veerendra Patil and JH Patel gave good administration. If someone is corrupt in the community, it is wrong to generalise the community as corrupt," he said.

CONTINUED ON: P4

Pained by Siddu's remark, says Bommai

CM Basavaraj Bommai said he is pained by ex-CM Siddaramaiah's 'corrupt Lingayat CM' remark. "Siddaramaiah is a senior leader. I did not expect a statement like this from him that has shaken the souls of Lingayats," he said. P4

Nirmala: Buying Amul products not against state

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

UNION Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka, said buying Amul products or products of any other brand is not against Karnataka.

She was speaking at an interactive session with citizens at RV Dental College on Sunday in Bengaluru, organised by the Thinkers Forum. On the Nandini and Amul issue, Nirmala said buying Amul in the absence of Nandini is not an act against Karnataka. "Every state has its own milk cooperative. Karnataka has Nandini, which is recognisable. Even now, I have Nandini milk, curds and peda. But when I travel and am in Delhi, I buy Amul. In the nearest outlet, if Nandini is not available, I'm not like a sanyasi to say I will not drink milk. I would still buy Amul. But it is required that we support Karnataka's milk farmers, especially as they are small farmers, owning one or two cows who supply to the Karnataka Milk Federation," she said.

She praised ex-CM BS Yediyurappa, crediting him for starting the trend of providing additional money to dairy farmers for milk provided. "Every step must be taken to support the farmers. Not just by any one government, but I think Yediyurappa's government should be given the credit for having given it for the first ever time. P4

ROYAL ROUT

RCB defeated RR by seven runs, who were chasing 190 after a century-stand by Glenn Maxwell and Faf du Plessis, in Bengaluru on Sunday | VINOD KUMAR T | PTI

Man held for hoax letter threatening attack on PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

THE Kerala police on Sunday arrested a 53-year-old Kochi native who threatened a suicide bomb attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the latter's two-day visit to the state on Monday.

Xavier Anjanikal wrote the letter that was received at the BJP headquarters office last week. He had written it posing as N J Johny, a fellow parishgoer with whom he allegedly holds a grudge. He had written a fake letter in Johny's name three years ago too.

"We got his handwriting analysed and confirmed the threat letter was written by him. There is no need to panic. The threat is a hoax," said Kochi City Police Commissioner K Sethu Raman.

After BJP leaders handed them the letter, the police reached Johny's house and recorded his statement. "We compared handwriting and confirmed that Johny did not write the letter. He then told us about the three-year-old incident in which Xavier had written a fake letter in his name," said an official from the Ernakulam North police station.

The police checked both letters and found that the handwriting matched.

He was taken into custody on Saturday night after registering an FIR and his arrest was recorded on Sunday.

BJP backing Ajit against pact with us, says Shiv Sena

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @Mumbai

AMID talks of an impending collapse of Maharashtra's Eknath Shinde-led government and NCP leader Ajit Pawar being anointed the state's next chief minister with the blessings of the BJP, the chief whip of Shiv Sena warned that any move from the BJP to help Pawar would go against the pact it signed with Sena.

Ajit Pawar

Bharat Gogawale said when the alliance with the BJP was formed, it was decided that Shinde will remain the chief minister till the next elections in 2024.

"We will not allow this (Ajit Pawar becoming CM) to happen under any conditions. The given word should be honoured," Gogawale said. Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Shirsat said if Pawar is made the CM, then his party will not be part of the government.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut claimed Shinde's government will collapse in the next 15 days. Raut said the death warrant of the government has already been issued.

"The BJP had told the chief minister to pack his bags. Now that the court verdict will be out, the Shinde government will collapse," Raut said.